

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2025 Hurley-Tracy Insulator Replacement Landing Zones

Project No.: 100430813

Project Manager: James Hill

Location: west-central San Joaquin County

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action:

Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of several federally owned and operated transmission lines throughout California, including the Hurley-Tracy (HUR-TRY) line, located in central California. Part of this responsibility includes ensuring WAPA maintains reliable operation of the transmission system.

WAPA proposes to replace insulators along a portion of the HUR-TRY transmission line. To aid in this process, two helicopter landing zones were selected which are off of WAPA's right-of-way (ROW). Both are in disturbed gravel or unpaved lots within agricultural areas and were previously reviewed prior to use as landing zones in January 2022.

Approximate addresses of the sites are as follows:

11433 South Tracy Blvd, Stockton

16500 Clifton Court Road, Stockton

This document examines the use of these areas for this project in 2025.

Findings:

WAPA follows the regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508, in addition to the Department of Energy's (DOE) regulations implementing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq. In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) DOE's NEPA Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), WAPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, WAPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Signed:

Name: Kristen Dalldorf

Title: Environmental Manager

Attachment: Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Hurley-Tracy Insulator Replacement Landing Zones

Project Site Description

The proposed landing zones are in rural portions of Stockton California. The surrounding land use is primarily agricultural, including rice fields and row crops. All landing zones are in disturbed lots or agricultural grassland.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

**Environmental Resource
Impacts**

**No Potential for
Significance**

**No Potential for Significance,
with Conditions**

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Explanation:

There are no anticipated activities involving ground disturbance. The proposed landing zones have been previously reviewed and used. No known archaeological resources have been identified within the proposed area of potential effect (APE). This project would have no adverse effect to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Explanation:

Ground disturbance is not anticipated in this project; therefore, no impacts would occur.

3. Plants

(including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation:

No special-status plants are known or expected in the project area. The sites are sparsely vegetated disturbed areas.

4. Wildlife

(including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation:

Desktop surveys were conducted for the sites. No wildlife resources of concern were identified in these surveys. Sites are disturbed areas with limited habitat.

5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)

Explanation:

The project area and adjacent areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains, or fish; therefore, no impacts would occur.

6. Wetlands

Explanation:

The project area does not have wetlands; therefore, no impacts would occur.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Explanation:

Spill prevention measures, including secondary containment at the landing zone, will be used during operations. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination. In the event of a hazardous material/waste spill, Environment will be contacted, WAPA Dispatch notified, and the appropriate Federal, State, and local regulating authority notified depending on the type and size of the spill

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Explanation:

The land use would not change at the project site. Nor is the project within, or near, any specially designated areas, such as National Scenic Rivers.

9. Visual Quality

Explanation:

The visual quality would be consistent with the existing transmission right-of-way corridor and surrounding agricultural land. There would be no significant change to the visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Explanation:

Air quality emissions would be from short-term helicopter use with only a few hours at each location and exhaust from worker's vehicles. The Project would be exempt from federal General Conformity Analysis and Determination because project emissions do not exceed de minimis levels for O&M activities, including helicopter emissions. Project emissions would not exceed local air quality district standards. The contractor is expected to adopt WAPA's procedures during the project:

AQ-SOP-1: The Contractor will adhere to all applicable requirements of those agencies having jurisdiction over air quality matters, and any necessary permits for O&M will be obtained.

AQ-SOP-2: Machinery and vehicles will be kept in good operating condition and older equipment will be replaced with equipment meeting applicable emission standards; appropriate emissions-control equipment will be maintained for vehicles and equipment, per EPA and/or WAPA air-emission requirements.

AQ-SOP-3: Idle equipment will be shut down when not in active use; visible emissions from stationary generators will be controlled.

AQ-SOP-4: Dust –control measures will be implemented in road construction and maintenance, as needed. Trucks transporting loose material will be covered or maintain at least two feet of freeboard and will not create any visible dust emissions.

AQ-SOP-5: There will be no open burning of construction trash.

AQ-SOP-6: Grading activities will cease during periods of high winds (as determined by local air quality management districts).

AQ-SOP-7: Major operations will be avoided on days when the local Air Quality Index is expected to exceed 150.

AQ-SOP-8: Include dust-control measures such as water or chemical suppressants.

AQ-SOP-9: Re-seeding of ground surfaces that have been significantly disturbed to prevent wind dispersion of soil.

AQ-SOP-10: Regular watering of exposed soils and unpaved access roads during maintenance activities.

AQ-SOP-11: Use reasonably practicable methods and devices to control, prevent, and otherwise minimize atmospheric emissions or discharges of air contaminants.

11. Noise

Explanation:

Helicopter noise would be temporary for a few hours and intermittently at each location for landing and takeoff, and would occur only during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Explanation:

During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or safety. Contractor shall be required to follow the OSHA standards set forth in 29 CFR 1910.269. Contractor shall also adhere to the requirements under Title 8 Cal OSHA Electrical Safety Order specifically Subchapter 5 and Subchapter 7. Contractor shall maintain a safe working distance from conductors as described in the above OSHA standards. If a safe working distance cannot be maintained, a clearance shall be requested 3 days in advance.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

None provided

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

None provided

Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

None provided

Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

None provided

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description:

WAPA will work closely with the landowners to provide adequate notification of project activities.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed:

Name: Kristen Dalldorf

Title: Environmental Manager